

Neighbors quarrel about traffic diversion

By STEWART WRIGHT
Of the Emerald

West 12th Avenue is a quiet residential street. But it has some new additions that, while intended to make it quieter, have sparked a controversy between the older residents and the younger ones.

The new additions are traffic diverters — white pieces of guardrail spanning half the street — designed to keep the traffic flowing on the more heavily traveled 11th and 13th Avenues.

The temporary diverters are part of a Department of Public Works experiment intended to keep the street quieter, less used and more practical for bicycle traffic.

Joe Hessler, traffic planner for the Department of Public Works, says, "We felt the diverters were, from a straight traffic standpoint, very successful."

Hessler recommends keeping the diverters, even though neighborhood opinion is split, because they have reduced traffic from 800 cars to fewer

than 400 cars a day. In addition, he says the increased bicycle traffic is a major benefit.

Betty Williamson is one of the more vocal opponents of the diverters.

"I'd like to be able to drive down the street and back," she says. "I pay taxes for it and I'd like to be able to use it. I resent them being put up there to keep the traffic out."

Because of the diverters, cars speed down the alleys, Williamson says. She adds there is no way for emergency vehicles to get through the street.

One weekend Williamson took an informal poll, and she found 130 people opposed to the diverters, she reports. Most of these people have lived in the neighborhood from 15 to 35 years and are vehemently opposed to the diverters, she says.

Mark Miller, who lives on the corner of 12th Avenue and Monroe Street, is the leader for the group that wants to keep the diverters.

He says 12th Avenue is a natural east-

west bicycle corridor and he sees the diverters as a major part of the city's planning program to keep Eugene livable.

The diverters enhance the neighborhood's livability and result in less cars, noise and pollution, he says.

Miller gathered up 467 signatures for a petition to keep the diverters. Nearly fifty

percent of the people who signed the petition live within a 12-by-six-block area of the diverters, he says, adding that most of them are young bicycle owners.

The Eugene City Council has scheduled a hearing on Aug. 13 to listen to recommendations from the Department of Public Works, the Planning Commission and private citizens.

Fowl drafted for insect war

The Chicken Patrol has been called to the rescue.

Grasshoppers are attacking a seedling area in the Siskiyou National Forest near Grants Pass, and the Forest Service has drafted 175 chickens from local citizens to liberate the plantation.

District Foresters Phil Hicks and Al Mikkelsen forested in the five-acre plantation to keep the fowl from going AWOL. Up to 600 insect insurgents per square yard were reported at the beginning, and

the chickens have made a "noticeable reduction" in the entrenched grasshoppers, according to Forest Service spokesperson Warren Olney.

The chickens eat the grasshoppers, but there have been no charges of wartime atrocities to date.

The recruits, unfortunately, will not get desirable veterans' benefits. After returning the borrowed chickens to their families, "we'll probably have a bar-becue" of those remaining, says Olney.

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